La Tea Dolly gets style makeover

Deanna Bremer Fisher

La Tea Dolly, a children’s tea shop located at 1637 Lee Road, has been made over by La Tea Dolly, a children’s tea shop located at 1637 Lee Road, has been made over by Deanna Bremer Fisher, artist and began his career as a hair dresser at 1637 Lee Road, has been made over by Deanna Bremer Fisher, artist and began his career as a hair dresser.

“Many of our students experience stress and to seek out remedies such as yoga. Says Donna Caputo of Atma Center, "Many of our students experience stress and to seek out remedies such as yoga."

The diversity and affordability of the Heights led the sisters to locate their unique shop here: the store not only sells doll accessories but also hosts special tea parties enabling girls 4-11 to discover their inner princess.

The sisters filled out an online application to be considered for the show and were delighted when the casting director e-mailed them back.

Running a business with family is not always easy, but says Davis, at the end of the day, “Who else would I want to share the success with other than my sisters?”

We won’t reveal the secrets to La Tea Dolly’s success here. Tune into the Style Network beginning on Feb. 15 to watch Ishkhans work his magic. Find the complete schedule at mystyle.com/mystyle/shows/perfect.

Peaceful transfer of power witnessed by millions in D.C.

Annie Kazarian

Many a resident of the D.C. area hosted friends from all over the country to witness the inauguration of President Barack Obama. My friend Barb and I were two of the fortunate ones and prepared for the festivities. With no tickets, we could not enter the Mall area, so we bundled up and found a sunny spot on Independence Street near Third Street. It was a great vantage point of the Capitol Building. We could not see individual officials on the platform of the Capitol, but could see people moving as they starting taking their seats on the Inauguration level, and listened to the festivities on radios playing nearby.

Then Barb found us a space on Third Street, directly behind the Capitol Reflecting Pool, and the street was clear.

Cleveland Heights retail mirrors national trends

Deanna Bremer Fisher

National news sources reported dismal retail sales in 2008. And while most Heights retailers report a difficult 2008 and an uncertain 2009, there were some bright spots.

Heights merchants reported sales down from 15 to 30 percent in 2008. January is typically a slow month for retail sales, but some retailers report that this January appears to be much slower than usual. "Both the economy and the weather makes it more bleak," says Zoss, The Swiss Baker’s Barbara Zoss.

Marissa Iacovetta of Reflections Interior Design says, "We are expecting a slow start to 2009. However we are hopeful that the ground work we are laying now will start to play out towards the end of the year."

We sometimes find that tough times make their offerings more desirable. Because more people are putting off buying a new car, auto repair businesses are doing well. And the more stressed people feel, the more likely they are to seek out remedies such as yoga.

 Says Donna Caputo of Atma Center, "Many of our students experience stress relief, a sense of community and an overall feeling of well-being." Enrollment is up, she says, and many folks who had been away for a while are returning.

The tough economy is prompting many businesses to forge stronger connections with their customers. "We recently sent out our first ever e-newsletter, thanking our customers for their continued patronage," says Dawn Quintana of Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa. "We need to keep our business names in front of the community, reminding them we have great local family-run businesses here, and that we want them as customers," she says.

Quintana’s has added three new names to the line up of businesses.

Citing the need to remain competitive, Zagara’s requested permission to add a driveway on E. Overlook Road, to demolish a home it owns at 3159 E. Overlook to add parking spaces, and to extend fencing to that area to reconfigure its parking lot. Zagara’s also asked that the entrance to the parking lot be moved to the back of the lot.

The Cleveland Heights Planning Commission has approved a plan by Zagara’s Marketplace to increase parking spaces and improve traffic flow in its parking lot. At a meeting on Jan. 14, the commission approved the plan with two changes.

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Will the Charter Review Commission increase the market value of our homes?

The economy will recover, and people will probably buy homes again. Will University Heights be ready? Unless our city government secures UH’s place on recovery, no one will look at us, except as low-cost housing.

If we want to be a significant player, we must start now. The time, energy and tax dollars used on the Charter Review Commission will not assure UH homeowners of increased housing values. A Branding Commission will.

I propose a program to brand University Heights and market that brand. I call on our mayor and council to begin that process now. We are the right size to pull off a brand image of being a great place to raise a young family, a city for professionals of all ages and a place to retire to, a lifestyle community.

What is branding? Marketing texts tell us a brand provides “a badge, emblem or symbol that gives the product credibility and helps consumers identify products and make choices.” It is no longer enough to be The City of Beautiful Homes, as curb-appeal alone does not compensate for issues that count against us.

My initial proposal is two-fold and modest. Brand UH as a healthier place to live and raise a family in a beautiful home. Then our branding needs to incorporate the green communities movement, and incorporate the psychological and physiological health aspects of the residents. To start, let’s be proactive in reducing the harmful effects of both noise and light pollution.

We all want our community to be vital, attractive and to command solid housing prices. I guarantee if we offer what the housing market wants, we will attract buyers. We can do this without tax increases. It will take hard work on the part of the council and mayor. It will take grant writing proposals. It will take the will of our entire community to be the neighbors we want for ourselves. But it can be done.

I’ll buy the sellers be able to identify UH homes and choose us. What do you think? Tell me your ideas.

Anita Kazarian
University Heights

Editor’s note: Anita Kazarian is a career marketing professional in the North American markets. She has also taught MBA level global marketing.

“No hype, no lycra.”

Your Body” in Cleveland Heights

www.atmacenter.com
2319 Lee Rd.                  216-371-9760

Voted #1 “Best Place to Treat

of the Cedar Lee garage.

This is still a work in progress—I didn’t find down leggings, and haven’t yet explored thermal underwear. Right now two pairs of flannel pajama pants under my slacks are working pretty well. I also have a very light Dacron-filled nylon blanket to cover my lap and ruck around my hips whenever I sit down to read or eat a meal.

Warm head: A sixth of the blood supply goes to the head, so it’s very important to keep one’s head warm. (If your feet are cold, put on a hat, goes the old saying.) I wear my nice warm knitted wool cap all day long.

Sleeping: A down comforter is about as good as you can get to stay warm. I sit down to read or eat a meal.

Cold without ever being uncomfortable. You surely might collect many more suggestions from your readers. Here are four that work for me:

Down jacket: Bird down is nature’s finest, lightest insulator. My down jacket feels warmer, though far lighter, than three sweaters, and I wear it day and night all winter. It cost around $500 at half-price and is a bargain. A four-quarter order sale from the Company Store, and has saved me well over a thousand dollars in gas bills.

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My husband and I are stalwart supporters of the Cedar Lee Theatre and shopping area. Over the holiday, we went to see a movie. Our enthusiasm was almost dashed when we encountered a long line of people trying to pay for parking in the parking garage. It took almost a half-hour just to get a parking ticket, only to repeat this process at the cinema. Having only one machine in each stairwell is ridiculous and creates a bottleneck. At least the parking garage should have a machine on each floor for consumers to pay quickly and get on their way.

More recent new releases will attract a large volume of customers to the cinema, all attempting to park in the garage. Something needs to be done or it will prove necessary to simply go elsewhere. It’s also very cold to stand in line in the winter garage. Some elderly folks were clearly having difficulties, which delayed the rest of the line. Temperatures were frigid. This is not a system designed to help people utilize the area!

I would like to make a suggestion that would reduce the time, effort and cost needed to collect our city’s trash. It could be done on a volunteer basis, and it would save the city lots of money both in manpower and in truck-related costs.

I like to think of it as “Trashpooling,” like carpooling. You get together with one or a few of your neighbors (most of our houses aren’t that far apart) and put all your trash on one tree lawn: trash in one spot, recyling close by, and yard waste in another. You could use one person’s yard per month, quarter, year and then switch off as your group choses.

We have lots of able bodied residents who could help out our elderly neighbors and put it on their lawns so they wouldn’t have to walk too far. If you had a lot of trash one week or the weather was really bad, then OK, go ahead and put it on your own tree lawn. But, the rest of the time, most of us only have one or two bags a week. A few more steps wouldn’t hurt us (most of us could use a little more exercise). The drivers would have fewer stops, which would reduce their time (out in the hot and cold), and in turn reduce the gas usage and wear and tear on their vehicles.

Who knows, maybe we will even get to know our neighbors again. I have been doing it with some of my neighbors and it seems to work.

Thanks for listening.

Cindy S.
Cleveland Heights

Cedar Lee parking garage is inefficient

“Trashpooling” would save the city money

Congratulations on the one day of success reported in Anita Kazarian’s Jan. 7 Heights Observer article, “One size smaller: going green in winter.” But I fear you may be discouraging both yourself and others from doing good to self and planet. I found “going green,” if done less abruptly, much less painful than you described and hope I might encourage you to try again.

I lowered my thermostat from 72 to 68 F like everyone else when the gas prices first went up. But then I kept on, I lowered my thermostat from 72 to 67 F, then to 66 F, then to 65 F, then to 63 F, and finally 60 F. My down jacket feels warmer, though far lighter, than three sweaters, and I wear it day and night all winter. It cost around $500 at half-price and is a bargain. A four-quarter order sale from the Company Store, and has saved me well over a thousand dollars in gas bills.

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The Heights Libraries welcome Cleveland Heights native CarDala Carter to their board of trustees.

While a student at Cornell University, Carter interned in both Brooklyn and Atlanta. Upon graduation, she moved to Florida. But with the majority of her family here, it was easy to decide to return to the area. She now resides in University Heights with her two children, Nia, 7, and Isaiah, 9.

Carter is an e-commerce marketing coordinator and a Web marketing specialist for National City Corp. and she just completed a tour as a master of information systems instructor/adjunct faculty at Bryant and Stratton College. She is working on a doctorate in business administration. In her spare time she enjoys reading, learning foreign languages, writing poetry, attending films and plays, and cooking.

“My favorite part of the CH-UH library system is the friendliness of the staff, the breadth of resources and materials available, the assorted programming and events offered, the unique and historic structure of each individual building, and the diversity of patrons each branch serves,” she said.

Judith Soppel is public relations coordinator for the CH-UH Public Library.

In November 2008, the Heights Libraries held Food-for-Fines, an event whereby customers could wipe away their fines and help people in the community in these difficult economic times.

The idea originated with library staffer Tenna Gildersleeve, who organized the collection. Customers received $1 off their current fines (it did not apply to lost and/or damaged items) for each non-perishable food item or paper item donated to the library.

The generosity of library customers was astounding! The collection resulted in 172 boxes (4,228 individual items) being delivered to the Heights Emergency Food Center, housed in Disciples Christian Church on Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights, just before Thanksgiving. Now that’s a win-win!

Food-for-Fines is a huge success!

Tonya Gibson

For more information visit www.heightslibrary.org or call 216-932-3600.
City manager rehired after retirement

During a public hearing prior to the regular meeting, council invited public comment on council’s intention to rehire City Manager Robert Downey after his retirement at the end of 2008. The “retire, rehire” program encourages experienced public employees to continue with full benefits through PERS and provides a savings to the city through a lower salary and no contributions to such items as insurance.

Frem Montch of Lynn Park Drive thanked Downey for his three decades of superb service. She suggested the position be opened to other applicants and Downey “express his personal vision” as part of a community-wide conversation.

At the subsequent regular meeting, all council members made comments on the proposal and voted, with one “no,” to reappoint Downey as city manager effective Jan. 1. Councilmember Wilcox cast the sole nay vote. While praising Downey, he questioned whether the “retire, rehire” approach was wise and would actually save the city money.

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Several council members pointed out that the city manager does the will of council and does not set policy and can act on his own vision. Hired directly by council, which can dismiss him at any time, Downey will be subject to a thorough job performance review every year.

Purchase of police cars

Council authorized the purchase of 11 new 2009 Ford Crown Victorias for the Police Department for a price not to exceed $32,750,000. Through statewide pooling, the city is able to pay a low price with no bidding.

Summer in the city

Ordinances pertaining to activities and fees at Cain Park and Cumberland Swimming Pool passed on second readings.

City budgets cut

Legislation dealing with the 2008 and 2009 budgets, first read at the preceding council meeting, passed. Careful cutting of $233,000 meant that the city would not be more than $4,000 in the red at the end of 2008. It is anticipated that the city will need to cut an additional $700,000 from the 2010 budget.

CDBG for HCC fair housing audits

Council authorized Heights Community Congress to use $17,000 from Community Development Block Grant funds for fair housing audit services.

Changes to the Cedar-Lee Garage

Council authorized the purchase and installation of an additional pay station at the Cedar-Lee garage at a cost of $41,831. Solar panels on the roof of the garage will provide all the power for its light show.

Zoning code amended

Council passed amendments to the city zoning code pertaining to minimum yard requirements for free standing air conditioning machinery and similar equipment; uses in commercial districts regarding automobile sales, rentals, and gasoline stations; limits on sizes of instructional signs; and regulations on yard and garage sales.

City Insurance

Council voted to continue the city’s protected liability self-insurance program with the independent agent Arthur J. Gallagher and Co. The 2009 premium, not to exceed $345,682, is lower than that of 2008.

County money for Cain Park Arts Fest

Council authorized the city manager to accept a grant of $21,450 from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture to support the Cain Park Arts Festival. The city will investigate whether this amount, only 0.25 percent from the county “cigarette tax” is a fair share.

Loans available for historic homes

Council approved continuations of the city’s relationship with the Cleveland Restoration Society: Preservation Resource Center of Northeastern Ohio for consultation services in connection with the Heritage Home Loan Program. For repairs and improvements to homes 50 years or older, the program provides below market rate loans up to $15,000 with no income restrictions for borrowers.

All night on-street parking

Permit parking is to be allowed from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. on the following streets where off-street parking is insufficient: Kensington, Hillcrest, Belmar, Glenmont and Eddington.

Mayor encourages resident contact

The mayor joined other council members in urging residents to contact council members with problems by e-mail or telephone. He noted that a phone call would bring a faster response. Telephone numbers are listed on the city Web site. He added that sarcasm, outrage, or unrealistic expectations as to the powers of the city do not help with dialogue.

City of Cleveland Heights

The Honorable Edward J. Kelley

Mayor, City of Cleveland Heights

Thursday, March 19 at 7 p.m.

at the Cleveland Heights Community Center

1 Manchester Blvd. Center of Manchester and Mayfield roads

www.futureheights.org

Cleveland Heights City Council

Highlights of December/January meetings

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2008

All council members present.

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CH LEADER BRIEFS OBAMA continued from page 1

The Obama administration is looking to make the biggest, quickest impact possible on day one with a stimulus package," Rittner said. "It was an honor to be invited to present to the Treasury Task Force. We came up with ideas that would support the president’s objective to jump start our economy.”

Rittner’s recommendations are outlined in the council’s Economic Development Finance Policy Paper, which was released to the public on the council’s Web site, www.cdfca.net, under legislative affairs.

The policy paper includes strategies, both large- and small-scale, to help local governments get the tools and financing they need for economic development.

What does this mean for Cleveland Heights? If these strategies were put into action, cities like Cleveland Heights would have more resources to attract and support small manufacturers and technology companies, such as the Cleveland Heights Community Congress to use $17,000 from the Heritage Home Loan Program. For repairs and improvements to homes 50 years or older, the program provides below market rate loans up to $15,000 with no income restrictions for borrowers.

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LWV observers: Blanche Valancy and Lisa Peter.
See disclaimer on page 3.

Jimmy O’Neill’s Tavern

Dining Hours
5:00 p.m.—12:00 midnight
7 nights a week*

2195 Lee Road
216-321-1116

Parking behind Cedar Lee Theatre

Come dine with us after the show!!

Katherine Kramer is the development director for the Council of Development Finance Agencies.
University Heights City Council
Highlights of December/January meetings

Monday, December 15, 2008
Steven Ballock, Frankie Goldberg excused.

Comments on JCU razing homes
Several people from the audience expressed concerns about John Carroll University’s plan to raze six homes to make way for a new athletic complex on a sensitive field. Their concerns included a negative impact on city revenues due to lost property and income taxes and the potential reduction of surrounding property values responding to a resident’s question. Mayor Beryl Rothschild explained the approval procedure for razing a home. The University submits an application, which goes to the planning commission and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals; whoever entity receives and reviews the application makes a recommendation to be presented to council for a vote. JCU for another submitted an application to raze the homes.

“Shovel-ready” projects
Mayor Rothschild announced that the U.S. Conference of Mayors leaders, Mayor Ted Strickland have asked cities to provide a list of “shovel-ready” projects. University Heights has submitted a list and, at this time, was one of 14 cities in Ohio to have done so.

Appropriations amendment
Council approved an ordinance amending the 2009 appropriations to increase the actual expenditures as of Dec. 1. This is a standard procedure. Appropriations for items such as streetlights, police and fire pension funds are initially passed in March.

NOPEC electric generation discount
Council approved a request of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to extend the current NOPEC (Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council) electric generation discount until First Energy’s permanent electric rate plan is approved

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2009
Peter R. Bernardo excused.

Comments on Exception Analysis
A concern raised by former council member Win Weiziler stimulated a discussion of study, making University Heights a priority of NEO/SO and its principal, David Aker, no experience with this kind of study. NEO/SO’s. Vice Mayor Adele Zucker, however, said, “I think we are rushing into something again.” She also pointed out that NEO/SO had no real experience and no track record.

Exception Analysis Study
Council voted to authorize the NEO/SO Exception Analysis Study, not to exceed $200,000, with Vice Mayor Zucker voting no.

ROADS
Council authorized the purchase of road salt at $4.75 per ton with the Ohio Department of Transportation. Since the road salt will come from Warrensville Heights, costs to transport will not be high.

Impounding fee increase
Council approved increasing the impounding fee commensurate with similar increases in neighboring communities such as Shaker Heights.

Committee on University Affairs
The Committee on University Affairs met Dec. 29. Approximately 63 residents were in attendance and spoke. The next meeting, scheduled for Jan. 12, will be a work session on John Carroll University’s campus development priorities.

LWV observer: Susan D. Pardee.
See disclaimer on page 3.

Anita Katarzyn is a resident of University Heights and enjoys being an active citizen.

Monday, January 26, 2009
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CH-UH Board of Education: Highlights of December/January meetings

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008

Cedar Center TIF
Peter Rubin of the Coral Company represented the City of South Euclid to explain the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan for renovating the part of Cedar Center that lies in South Euclid and also the school district. The plan includes multi-story buildings and a three-quarter acre park. In addition to the TIF the City of South Euclid will issue bonds to help with the cost. The TIF will be 100 percent abatement of taxes for 30 years, but the city will share 25 percent of the income tax with the schools. The school administration has been talking to South Euclid, but the TIF is not final. Detailed information and question and answers will take place at the February work session.

Library materials
In a statement from the audience, Teachers’ Union President Tom Schmida gave board members a position paper from the union on the procedure for the removal of library materials.

Report on Coventry School
The Lay Finance Committee unanimously recommended that the board accept the Cleveland Music School Settlement proposal for Coventry School. The Settlement was the only organization to submit all that was requested by the board.

Field trips
The board approved a field trip to the Senior Ohio Model UN and two music tour field trips for the High School and Monticello Middle School.

Gym dedication to Coach Cappelletti
The superintendent announced that the south gym court at the high school would be dedicated to former basketball coach, Jim Cappelletti.

Workshop on playing the ParentGame
Carroll Provan
Ruffing Montessori School will present a workshop on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. on fun ways to improve family communications, using a game developed by Heights parents Juliette and Michael Reynolds, called Parent Talk. The program, free and open to the public, will take place at Ruffing, 3380 Fairmount Blvd. Attendees will get a brief introduction, then play the game, and end with a discussion of the lessons learned. Using the game, parents learn ways to assess situations and get help raising their children according to their values and standards. Parents discuss in calm and honest ways the topics that shape their child's development, and develop skills to become better parents. Call 216-321-7571 to RSVP.

Suzie Peyrebrune and Nate Lott know their geography!

Spell well, do good! Calling all spellers.

Joy Henderson
Heights High students on The SMART Team (pictured left to right): Chris Hoffman, Rachael Collver, and Lewis Pollis) narrowly missed first place at the 2008 Reaching Heights Adult Spelling Bee. The Upper Case Team of Pat Crago, Jeff Janata and Lynn Singer from Case Western Reserve University placed first when they correctly spelled perchlorinate. Each team’s $500 fee supports Reaching Heights’ School Team Grants to CH-UH teachers. For more information and to enter a team, contact Reaching Heights at 216-932-5110. A $50 deposit is due by March 1.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.

The stars shine bright at Saint Ann School
Stephanie Applegate
It may be awards season in Hollywood, but closer to home, Saint Ann School students have been basking in the glow of achievement themselves. Amid a flurry of post-holiday tournaments and contests, students at Saint Ann School aspired big and finished even bigger this past month.

Nicholas Bulish and Ryan Hertz proudly display their awards.

Second-grader Nicholas Bulish and fourth-grader Ryan Hertz received plaques from Cleveland Heights City Hall for their winning poster and essay entries in this year’s city-sponsored Martin Luther King, Jr. contest. The contest entries answered the question, “If Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were alive today, what advice would he have for young people?”

Suzy will next take the state-qualifying exam.
Fifth and sixth graders from the Saint Ann School Enrichment Program competed against 20 other schools in Ohio in the Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl, a computer-based team academic tournament, and placed second overall with 96 percent. Congratulations go out to Izzy Catanzaro, Brady Furlich, Emily Lott, Riley Keenan, Katie Killeen, Maeve Kolk, Suzie Peyrebrune and Sloanl Samples!

All in all, it’s been a great start to the New Year for our Sabers!

Stephanie Applegate is a life-long resident of Cleveland Heights and the mother of two boys. She also currently serves on the board of Heights Community Congregational Church's own Cub Scout troop, held its annual Pinewood Derby, a showcase of racing talent and creativity. This year’s fastest car, “I Am Speed,” belonged to Tyler Applegate in second grade. Rounding out the top three were parishioner Kirk Pearce and Nicholas Bilich, grade two.

And finally, Pack 71, Saint Ann Church’s own Cub Scout troop, held its annual Pinewood Derby, a showcase of racing talent and creativity. This year’s fastest car, “I Am Speed,” belonged to Tyler Applegate in second grade. Rounding out the top three were parishioner Kirk Pearce and Nicholas Bilich, grade two.
Points for good behavior

Suisei Kasjer

Student achievement and student behavior go hand-in-hand. That's why the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District’s commitment to high achievement, for all students includes a proactive and supportive approach to student behavior. The district’s transformation agenda promotes not only top-quality instruction but also positive student behavior. High achievement requires high achievement. Each reinforces the other.

Last year the district hired Dr. Jeffrey Johnston as the newly created position of coordinator of student support programs. He works with principals and school-based teams throughout the district to create a three-tiered “pyramid of support” to ensure the optimal conditions for student learning, safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments in every school.

For Johnston, concentrating on behavior isn’t an irritating distraction from the real work of school, but one that is supportive in making a difference in the lives of students. With a background in behavioral health and special education, he has an upbeat and hopeful attitude. Johnston’s job is to help students and educators create the constructive action that produces results.

Adults can do much to set the tone to help students develop the social and behavior skills that they need for success in school and beyond. When adults take charge and create order, there is more time to teach. Conversely, negative behavior leads to lowered expectations and a decrease in instructional time and creating better opportunities for students to learn. The old “shape up or ship out” attitude towards misbehaving students doesn’t cover it.

The three-tiered pyramid of support adds up to more time for instruction. The first level aims at the way the whole school operates, establishing expectations for students and adults for the common spaces of the school to supplement teacher expectations for classroom norms. For example, the middle schools have documents that articulate behavior expectations for the hallway, lunch and dismissal. Each year, students are taught about expected behavior.

Kids know how to act, so they can meet expectations, and this results in a more comfortable environment and fewer discipline referrals.

When overall appropriate behavior is the norm, it is easier to identify and address the needs of children whose behavior-related issues call for more help. The second and third tiers offer supportive interventions that encourage pro-social behavior.

Targeted social skills groups, mentoring, and more intense relationship-building activities are some of the second- and third-tier interventions in place at the middle schools that support students and help them connect better with teachers and their peers. Each middle school also has an alternative learning environment – a classroom where students whose behavior is consistently problematic receive both academic and social skill support. Together, these strategies minimize the number of behavior referrals and suspensions.

The pyramid of support reflects the district’s commitment to the development of the whole child, a broader focus that reaps benefits not only in social interaction but also in academic achievement.

Suisei Kasjer is an advocate for public education. She founded Reaching Heights, a citizen advocacy organization for the CH-UH schools, in 1989 and retired as executive director in December 2007. She is a resident of Cleveland Heights and her two adult children are graduates of the Heights schools.

Boulevard Blitz program leaves no child behind

Ben Cohen

This fall, testing at Boulevard Elementary School identified 15 second graders whose literacy skills left them at risk of being left behind. Beth Rae, literacy coach for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, teamed up with Dennis Osgood, the founder of Reaching Heights’ Many Villages Campaign, to implement a volunteer tutoring program at Boulevard Elementary School.

The intervention that Rae designed, and that Osgood along with Deanne Lentz implemented, called for short, repeated flashcard instruction. Children received 15 minutes of tutoring four days a week. Volunteers tutored three or four students for one hour a week. There was a great showing of support from Forest Hill Church and Boulevard alumni.

When the intervention started, each of my three students had trouble recognizing all of the letters in the alphabet, much less stringing them together into words. By the end of our intervention, each had made tremendous strides.

Rae reports that the statistical results from the intervention were outstanding. At the start, each child was struggling at identifying and reading sounds. By the end, 14 of the 15 children involved were passing in the 80 percent range or above. In September, the average for knowing the sounds of letters was 63 percent. By December, it was almost 100 percent. The average comprehension for reading words was 48 percent in September, and was over 80 percent when we were done.

The individual results in some instances were amazing: one of our students grew over 70 percent in her ability to read and recognize words. These percentages might not make sense at first, but imagine looking at this sentence and getting almost half of the letters wrong and failing to identify over half of the words. We held these truths to be self-evident, that all children are created equal.

For the kids, the Boulevard Blitz was an amazing success. Beth Rae is now turning her eye to other students, even kindergarteners, to ensure that no one is left behind. If you live in the Boulevard area, as a parent, older sibling, grandparent, or community member, contact Deanne Lentz at Deanne@lentzes.us for an opportunity to volunteer. If you live outside the Boulevard area, look up Dennis Osgood (dennisosgood@she .global.net) and Cheryl Oates (croyate@ netscape.net) to see whether Reaching Heights (reachingheights.org) has a Many Villages program in the school closest to you.

For me, the process was amazing. These students loved to grasp what we described as the “keys to the kingdom.” Once they learned how to identify letters, and recognize blends, they were able to teach themselves words. Words now move slowly, but at the end it began to rush forward.

On the last day of the intervention, I sat an extra moment with one of my students. She quietly looked up at the wall where she saw the Boulevard Pledge outside the bathroom. This is a child who had heard the Boulevard Pledge recited every day of school. Here she was, as I organized the flashcards and prepared to say goodbye, sounding it out for herself.

She took ownership of the words; they meant something to her; they were her words. I got to watch that!

A parent of two Boulevard students, Ben Cohen works in New Orleans, La., but lives in Cleveland Heights.

Participants expressed their appreciation of Zagar’s. An employer of 165 people, they said, Zagar’s is a community asset. Its building and grounds are aesthetically pleasing. Its product line and customer service is exceptional and the match the character of the community.

An audiotope and meeting minutes are available. Contact the Cleveland Heights Planning Department at 216-291-4878 or planning@clvhts.com.

Fram Mentic is a resident of the Seaview neighborhood in Cleveland Heights.
Heights Youth Club members attend minority business dinner

Jeff Haynes

Heights Youth Club was one of two organizations chosen by the Northern Ohio Minority Business Council to participate in an event recognizing corporations, educational and government agencies, and minority business enterprises for their commitment to diversity and economic development.

The 10 HYC attendees had an additional surprise when Eaton Corpora
tion, an event sponsor, presented each of them with a brand new Hewlett-Packard laptop computer after the event.

“This was a great deal of anticipation at HYC when representatives of Eaton and HP presented the computers. It was very exciting to see the computers themselves and to see the teens’ reactions to their brand new ‘hooked up’ laptops,” said HYC director Roscoe Morgan.

The teens also received a crash course on how to use their new machines effectively.

“It was an honor to meet Donna Brazile of CNN and the entire night was a great opportunity,” said Heights High junior Pasquinel Averyheart.

Heights Youth Club is located at 2065 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights. Call 216-321-CLUB (2582) for more information or to participate in a Wednesday evening faculty tour.

Jeff Haynes is the assistant club director at the Heights Youth Club.
The power of chocolate
A valentine for Mitchell’s

Jessica Schreiber

For generations, Cleveland Heights residents have come to Mitchell’s Fine Candies for their Valentine’s Day chocolates.

Owner Bill Mitchell explains the appeal. "Chocolate is one the pleasures of life. Chocolates are a pleasure to give and a pleasure to receive." Dark chocolate has health benefits, too — antioxidants. Mitchell’s father lived to be 102.

Today, when people are counting pennies, chocolate lovers may be tempt-switch to over to mass-produced chocolates.

Don’t do it. "Small candy boutiques are better by definition," says Mitchell. "Chocolate is perishable produce." Mitchell’s chocolates are made more frequently, in small batches, with the finest ingredients.

The mass-produced box of chocolates you buy for Valentine’s Day may have been a regional sales last summer and contain paraffin filler.

Scott Raab, writing in Esquire magazine, proclaims: "(Mitchell’s) is the best chocolate I’ve ever eaten. And I’ve been to Paris . . . and Switzerland, too."

Mitchell’s employee Vanessa May displays confections for Valentine’s Day.

Bill Mitchell’s creation, the Greecia Collection, incorporates all of these techniques. Named after the water na-dash of Greek mythology, the Greecia chocolates are complex, bombarding the senses with a lingering interplay of taste and texture. Pallas, for example, has filbert, ouzo and espresso flavors. Marzipan, ginger, pistachio and citrus peels contrast with Cointreau in Daphne, and Galatea combines raspberry puree, Chambord and hazelnut. Even the jazzy red box, which opens like a Chinese puzzle, is elegant.

Mitchell’s offers traditional varieties of chocolates – fruits, nuts, creams and chewies. A box of assorted chocolates, which offers a little of everything, is the top seller. Truffles, orange peel dipped in dark chocolate, pecan turtles, marshmallows and pretzels are also popular.

Bill Mitchell tells the story of a man who, 24 years earlier, missed seeing off his girlfriend by one day before she left for the Himalayas. He arranged to send her a half-pound box of Mitchell’s chocolates by way of a Sherpa. Today, that couple’s daughter Amelia Catalano works at Mitchell’s. Never doubt the power of choce-
late.

Jessica Schreiber is a community volunteer.

Heights chamber links local businesses

Mark Majewski

“Most of the time, we do business with people we already know. The chamber provides a forum for creating those relationships,” says Angie Pohlan, executive director of the Heights-Hilcrest Regional Chamber of Commerce. The committee work, members meet local government officials and seek ways to promote development. The chamber itself is often the first contact made by businesses seeking to move to the area.

In addition to the continuing busi-
ness breakfast series, the chamber pro-
 motes social networking through young professional mixers. A major regional networking event for all businesses is the annual HRCC Business Expo. The 14th Expo will be held on May 5 at Landerhaven Country Club. Last year, more than 120 exhibitors participated with over 1,000 attendees. Local busi-
ness owners and consumers are encour-
gaged to attend this free event.

Learn more at www.hrcc.org or by contacting Angie Pohlan at 216-997-7328, or e-mailing info@hrcc.org.

Mark Majewski is a 20-year resident of Cleveland Heights and a community planning consultant.

I never doubt the power of good chocolate. When you look back on 2008, we will all remember the high gas prices, the McCain/Obama election race, and the “For Sale” signs lined along the streets. Yet after such a horrific economic year, there is finally something to celebrate! Cleveland Heights has long prided itself on the number of independent busi-
nesses within the city, and now there is another to honor.

We are celebrating a small business in its 12th year, which has come to be a staple in which Cleveland Heights should rejoice. The proverbial gem amongst the rough, Parnell’s Pub is a cozy Irish pub situated on Lee Road in the city. The pub itself has been in the city for many years now, however, it is thanks to its current owner, Irish transplant Declan Synnot, that it has survived and flourished since 1997. This year on Jan. 31, Parnell’s celebrated its 12th anniver-
sary. People flocked from the Heights and beyond to sing Happy Birthday to the old oak bar and to congratulate Syn-
oteur on a pub well done.

Synnot, a native of County Dublin, moved in 1996 from Boston to help open Flannery’s Pub in downtown Cleveland. It only took a few years be-
fore he was introduced to The Charles Stewart Parnell, who now considers himself his second home. He purchased the pub Feb. 1, 1997, and soon thereafter relocated himself to the Heights as well. After only six years of owning the busi-
ness, he expanded into the old Cigar Store to add a few extra seats. Since then it has become home to an annual St. Patrick’s Day party, is known as the best place to watch soccer and rugby, and is the place in the Heights to have a pint of Guinness.

Parnell’s is, and always has been, a gathering place for the young and old. And if you are (lucky enough to be) a regular, you can bet your pint will be poured before you have picked out your seat!

The casual observer might wonder how a small pub manages to not only survive, but to thrive, against the chains and corporate restaurants during these hard times, but the answer is really quite simple. Some may say it is the lack of the Irish; I say it is because Syn-
oteur has brought the craic to Cleveland Heights.

Craic is a traditional Gaelic word with many definitions, but it is most commonly used to describe having a rousing fun time with many good friends.

Liz Tokah is a forever CH resident. Yes, she’s lived here her whole life!
**Merit at Merritt Café**

Home-cooking, hospitality and culinary surprises

Delia Burke

For breakfast or lunch, made-to-order with fresh ingredients, served up with warmth and a sparkle, Merritt Bakery & Café at the corner of Roanoke and Noble roads in Cleveland Heights might be just the place for you.

Owner Bonnie Graham opened the business in February 2000, assisted by her mother, Estella Merritt, for whom the café is named. Both mother and daughter do cooking and baking, but Estella (called “Mom” by some of the regulars) is the primary cook.

Their business began by carrying a basket of goodies to office parks or school boards for munching, expanded into catering when customers demanded more, and evolved into the café. Estella’s blueberry and banana walnut pancakes are among the dine-in breakfast favorites. Traditional breakfast foods are available, too: croissant egg-sandwiches, French toast with bacon, and muffins and coffee to-go.

Lunch features include corned beef, turkey, ham, tuna, chili or chicken salad sandwiches, wraps, soup in cold months, and delicious main-dish salads with grilled chicken and homemade dressings.

Desserts are always visible in the counter-case. Staples are cookies, brownies, individual cake slices, sweet potato pie, and bread pudding with Estella’s fabulous lemon sauce.

Mother and daughter cater for office or private parties, including Continental breakfasts, box lunches, and meals to order. You can pick up a long list of special occasion cakes and pies to order. Red velvet cake and peach cobbler are perennial favorites.

The fourth of six children, Bonnie has been asked about how it feels to work with her mother. “We’re the best of friends,” she says. “We even talk in sync.” Estella ‘retired’ from Caterpillar in 1993 after 25 years, but three years later found her true calling with Bonnie. On any given day, neighborhood denizens or café fans will be found at one of the establishment’s five cozy tables exclaiming over their meals.

“Receive a warm welcome when you walk in, and the food is very good,” responded Brady Howard. “Their food is awesome and they’re really nice people,” remarked David Eros of Cleveland Heights.

The café is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, and till 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, when you can order dinner items (eat-in or carry out). Call 216-291-2776.

Delia Burke is a retired government worker and former English teacher who loves living in Cleveland Heights.

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**Joe the Coupon Guy tells Heights residents how to save**

MartyAnne Kowalski

Heights residents are feeling the recession this winter as surely as the cold. Many wonder how to keep their budgets on track as expenses rise. Joe Daugirdas, also known as The Coupon Guy, has tips to share.

For starters, there are many sources of coupons. The Sunday Plain Dealer and the Heights edition of the Sun News have coupons nearly every week. The Cleveland Heights Main Library at Lee Road even has a coupon swap area, available to all.

And, Daugirdas suggests people not overlook what comes in the mail: Valpak, JB Dollar Stretcher and other coupon books also offer free discounts.

The most important thing to do to ensure savings from coupons, Daugirdas says, is to keep them in the car at all times.

To skeptical new couponers he says, “Try it once. You’d be amazed how much you can save.” How much does Daugirdas save? Just on groceries, he usually spends $500 a month at a savings rate of 70 percent off or more.

To Daugirdas’ claim that he saves enough to buy a car each year, the question is: Would it be a beater or a Beemer? “A Beemer,” he says, grinning and using the nickname for the luxury BMW.

Daugirdas tallies each category of savings for the year and says the result is astonishing. “If you add all those together, it is more than $30,000.”

When asked how to get savings at this level, Daugirdas says, “Start forcing yourself not to buy anything until you can get it for 70 percent off or more. Then you will really start fine-tuning what you were going to purchase.”

The Coupon Guy’s advice is to aim for items on sale at half price and then use a matching coupon to reduce the price even further.

Daugirdas spends an hour or two on Sunday preparing his coupon strategies. This is, he points out, “about the same amount of time it takes a couple to argue about money every week.”

Daugirdas teaches classes at libraries and at local universities that cover many ways to save in addition to coupons. Interested Heights residents can visit Daugirdas’ Web site, www.joethecouponguy.com, and consult his schedule of appearances. It’s also helpful to seek out coupon buddies online at www.northeastohiocouponers.com, says Daugirdas.

His “Savvy Shopper” book includes 151 pages of tips and websites offering more. One is www.gasbuddy.com helps people find cheap gas in the area. Other sites help readers slash vacation expenses. Daugirdas also sells the “Our Town and All Around Book,” which lists at least a dozen deals in the Cleveland Heights and University Heights area.

MartyAnne Kowalski is a graduate student studying for a Masters in Library and Information Science at Kent State. She is interested in meeting the local “superheroes” and sharing their stories. Her other interest is sharing how to survive and thrive in any economy through financial literacy, “money knowledge,” as the super-powered skill we can all learn more about.
Aeoshi Café: a tasty preview before a Cedar Lee movie

Christina Klenotic

Five-dollar Monday movie nights at the Cedar Lee Theatre are a great time to sample some of Lee Road’s restaurant offerings. During my last two trips to the movies, I arrived early to snag a parking spot and tickets before they became scarce, and met up with a friend at Aeoshi Café next door to grab a bite and pass the time before the movie.

Previously I overlooked Aeoshi since the Heights has been flooded with Asian dining options, but some gentle persuasion from friends who are fans enticed me to stop in the cozy restaurant that overtook the former Starbucks. The window advertising sushi and paninis gave me pause, but over the course of my visits, I found that sushi and paninis were available when I visited.

A husband-and-wife team of proprietors runs the café and also a location by the same name on Cleveland’s westside. Aeoshi Café has a pleasant vibe to visitors. Aeoshi Café is open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday.

The sushi dishes are fresh, and prices are reasonable. A dinner check for two often costs less than $20, and is accompanied by tasty complimentary pear and maraschino cherries.

Wraps are served with cooked rice, cheddar jack cheese, spicy mayo and veggies. They were a welcome detour after holiday gorging. My husband said he’d order the grilled steak wrap ($6.70) again, but I was disappointed with the bland vegetarian guacamole wrap ($5.70), however, I ordered it without the mayo. I particularly didn’t care for the differing temperatures on each side of the wrap: one side was chilled iceberg lettuce and the other was warm rice.

On both visits I realized, well after ordering, that specials were available, so make sure to check out the whiteboard near the register when you first walk in. The soup and roll specials available looked intriguing.

On both Monday nights, the restaurant was half full with couples, friends and solo diners. Tables and couches are comfortable, and the friendly staff offer a pleasant vibe to visitors. Aeoshi Café is open for lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday.

Per her grandmother, Christina Klenotic is a “good eater” who never met a carb she didn’t like. She enjoys sampling our area’s eclectic restaurants, galleries and neighborhoods.

Aeoshi Café’s surprising Island Roll.

Splendid value wines

Loren Sonkin

2007 Sielo Blu Pinot Grigio

Alto Adige is an Italian province near the Austrian border and home to this delicious white wine. The wineries of northern Italy turn out some of the best white wines taking advantage of mountain air and soils. This wine delivers a crisp and fruit-filled aroma (think peaches and green apples). It sees no oak when being made allowing the natural vibrancy to remain. It has a lush juicy texture that you rarely find in wines at this price. It would be a terrific match with sea food or pastas with a cream or cheese sauce. At 12.5 percent alcohol, it would work great on its own or with some cheeses too. I purchased it on sale at Heinen’s for $5.

2009 Mosen Cleto

The region of Campo de Borja in Spain is home to some great wine values. This unusual bottle is covered with rough particles, so it shouldn’t slip out of your hand when pouring, but the wine inside is velvety smooth. This lovely wine has a beautiful purple color, attractive nose of vanilla and raspberries and a sweet raspberry and cocoa taste.

Available at Heinen’s and Zagara’s for $5. The grapes come from old vines, some over 100 years old, which gives it some backbone and complexity. This is a wine that can be sipped on its own or enjoyed with hearty winter dishes this time of year.

Loren Sonkin lives in Cleveland Heights, where he is a an attorney and contributor to Intovino.com.

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Obama’s Victory Garden

Scott Castor

In his Inaugural Address, President Obama stated: “Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America. For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act—not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology’s wonders to raise health care’s quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. All this we will do.”

This is a call for sustainability in our community, nation, and world. Since 9/11, though we went to war, we were not asked to sacrifice, or do anything but go shopping by our then-President George W. Bush.

We have now been told by our new president, “What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility; a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but, rather, seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.”

We can start by doing what we can to improve our communities. I call on everyone to embrace these challenges and show commitment by planting a front-yard, edible Victory Garden.

Activism of this sort is steeped in history. In 1944, the call to plant a Garden for Victory was answered by 20 million Americans and produced 30 to 40 percent of the nation’s fresh produce. Even Eleanor Roosevelt participated, on the White House grounds, much to the chagrin of the Department of Agriculture. In 1944, having a Victory Garden was not only expected to help the war effort, it was considered patriotic. Victory Gardens could help stem global warming by reducing the fuel used in food transportation. Our food travels an average of 1,500 miles, according to www.revivevictorygarden.org, a website devoted to the Victory Garden renaissance. In using less fuel for transport, we might also be contributing to world peace by reducing reliance on foreign oil.

Victory Gardens could also help curb obesity by improving our food quality. According to Michael Pollan, author of “In Defense of Food” and “The Omnivore’s Dilemma,” obesity in this country is directly related to our nation’s food policy. It encourages our farmers to grow corn and soy beans, building blocks of the obesity-producing fast food and processed foods that are too common in the American diet.

If First Lady Michelle Obama was asked to plant a Victory Garden, what better example could there be? If meals at the White House were partly homegrown and organic, this could send a serious message to the Department of Agriculture, our nation and the world (and provide a wonderful teaching tool for the Obama’s daughters, Malia and Sasha). So as the seed catalogs start arriving and thoughts of early spinach, peas and mâche whet my palette, I vow to plant my first Victory Garden. How about you?


Recycling Part I: at the curb

Lori Postak

So, I’m a fanatic. I admit it. It’s the recycling mindset: before anything gets dropped into a trash bin, ask whether it can be recycled or reused. At work, home, school, or in a store. Can the backside of that fax confirmation be used in my printer at home? If there isn’t a bin, ask "why not?" to raise awareness.

If you’re a recycling newbie, begin with the blue bags. Each community has different practices, so check your city’s website to find out what can go in the blue bag. Decide where you’ll keep the bag as you fill it. Mine’s in the pantry, but under the sink or in the garage also works. Do you want it close by for easy deposit or out of sight where you have more room? Remember to rinse out all food containers to prevent bad smells from developing. That kills your recycling mindset right away.

Locally, paper recycling has greatly expanded. Some cities do curbside pick up. If yours doesn’t, consider dropoff at city hall or use Alibriti sites at libraries, churches and schools all over. Keep newspaper separate as it is more valuable (1 blue bag newsprint). For mixed paper, I keep a paper bag right next to your trash can to catch all the junk mail, old magazines, catalogs, and boxes. Collapse the boxes for more space. A nice size decorative wastebasket works well for this.

Eliminating standard glass, plastic and steel recyclables, plus all paper from your trash, will probably reduce your amount of trash by at least half.

Beware newbies, I have to admit that, as a fanatic, I do freak out when I see that unforgivable offense: contaminating a recycling bin with other trash. A little awareness goes a long way: It doesn’t take much to have a recycling mindset.

Lori Postak is an organizer at heart who is passionate about all types of conservation and buying local. She has lived in the Heights for many years with her husband and three children.

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CityMusic Cleveland presents two jewels

Beverly Simmons

If there had been a hit parade in the 19th century, then surely Schubert's String Quintet and Mendelssohn's Octet would be tied for number one! At the age of 11, as he was dying, Franz Schubert wrote his string quintet, a work that takes the listener on a powerful journey celebrating life and beauty, defying the fact that the composer lived under the yoke of grinding poverty. It exudes such understanding of humanity and transcends everything that is bad in the world.

Felix Mendelssohn wrote his Octet while a teenager of 16. Although his background of great wealth and privilege was so different from Schubert's, he lived only 36 years. Octet speaks of optimism. It is the greatest dialogue among eight musicians, who together produce such powerful music that it sounds like an entire symphony orchestra.

We invite you to spend an evening and have the music transport you to another place. Bring your children, your friends or a date and find out why CoolCleveland.com calls CityMusic Cleveland "spellbinding" and FUN! World-renowned guest artists—violinists Kyung Sun Lee, Ivan Chan and Peter Salaff and cellist Edward Arron—join with CityMusic Cleveland violist Zsolt Eder, violinists Charles Krenner and Eric Wong and principal cellist Keiko Ying for an intimate and romantic night of music making.

CityMusic Cleveland will perform the first of six free concerts, Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. at Fairmount Presbyterian Church, 2775 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights, 216-321-8273 or visit the website: www.citymusiccleveland.org. The website also has program notes and information call 216-321-8273 or visit the website: www.citymusiccleveland.org.

Cleveland Heights Congregations provides rare glimpse of the past

Heather Fisher

The richness of Cleveland Heights history continues to be revealed in the latest book by Marion Morton, "Cleveland Heights Congregations" (Arcadia Publishing). In this new book in Arcadia's Images of America series, Morton tells the story of the evolution of Cleveland Heights' many religious congregations.

Most Heights congregations had their origins in some of the earliest religious institutions in Cleveland. As times changed, they made their way to the Heights, as did so many individuals during the early part of the 20th Century. Morton identifies the origin of each congregation and chronicles further changes in the rich histories of these great institutions.

Central to Morton's story is that no matter how much Cleveland Heights has evolved and changed, the city's religious institutions have remained an important stabilizing influence.

Images of America series books are all about the pictures, and Morton's new book is a must have for anyone who loves Cleveland Heights history.

David Huffman

Calling all amateur sleuths and board game enthusiasts! The Cedar Lee Cult Film Series presents three showings of the comedy classic, "Clue," based on the popular board game. A box office failure when originally released in 1985, the film has developed a huge following thanks to home video and the over-the-top performances of stars Tim Curry and Madeline Kahn. Like the original, the Cedar Lee will show "Clue" with different endings so audiences won't know who the killer is until the final reel is done rolling.

"Clue" fans come close to 'Rocky Horror' like enthusiasm," according to Kev Boyck, head of the Cleveland 'Rocky Horror' troupe, Simply His Servants. "People come dressed as their favorite characters and a live show has developed in cities such as L.A. and Chicago which host annual screenings of 'Clue.' We're thrilled that some of the Chicago cast will be helping us as we host our first 'Clue' show."

For fans who want to see the film without a live "Clue" will play Saturday, Feb. 7 at 9:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 8 an interactive live cast will accompany the film at a special added showing at 9:30 p.m.

In keeping with the board game's mystery experience, attendees won't know how much their tickets will be until they get to the show. Admission is $1 plus whatever is rolled on a single die. Online tickets won't be available. Tickets will be on sale at the Cedar Lee Theatre box office only, 2165 Lee Rd., starting Wednesday, Feb. 4. For more info visit www.Clevelandcinemas.com.

David Huffman is the director of marketing for Cleveland Cinemas.

Meredith Holmes

Meredith Holmes was Poet Laureate of Cleveland Heights 2005-2006.

After the Blizzard

by Linda Tuhill

Sunday morning we trudge to church through corridors of yesterday's snow. Sun fingers the facets in crystals, turning the familiar into a dizzying chasm. I reach back across the years and touch my mother's hand. He bundles me onto my Lightning Glider, and grasp my dad's gloved hand.

He bundles me onto my Lightning Glider, and grasp my dad's gloved hand. We grow shadows in a world of hush, cutting lines in the snowy crust. Metal-clipped galoshes squish along the rural highway, the sled's runners. He bundles me onto my Lightning Glider, and grasp my dad's gloved hand.

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The czar of Starbucks

Anyone who frequents the Cedar-Fairmount Starbucks knows who Allen Friedlander is; either by name or sight: he’s the cheerful man in the power chair. He’s a longtime Heights resident. In the neighborhood, people call him the czar, a nickname that comes from his decision to abandon his artwork, but not his love for people. Allen Friedlander enjoys his domain as the czar of Starbucks.

MS patient Allen’s age. Allen sums up his motivation to exercise and socialize in simple terms, “That’s all I have going for me. If I don’t work out that’s one day closer to possibly being bedridden and I don’t want to be in that place. And if I don’t socialize I could easily become isolated in my apartment. I love people too much for that to happen. My world may be small but I make the most of it."

Jeff Birdwell, store manager at Starbucks, says, “My days get started right when I see the smile on Allen’s face and a sparkle in his eye.” Stop into Starbucks and say hello to the czar. He’ll give you a big smile and you’ll be better for it.

Tom Woodworth is a retired advertising executive for Proctor and Gamble, another role, as the czar of Starbucks. Woodworth is now a full-time volunteer at the Heights Observer. He’s always buying and paying cash for the unusual.

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The Nature Center hosts bird events

Nature Center hosts bird events

Seniors Celebrate the New Year

Andrea Turner

Thursday, Feb 19, 6-8 p.m.
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An invitation is extended to all people 55 and older who are interested in birding.

The Nature Center has birdseed sale proceeds available.

All events are free and open to the public.

For information, call Andrea Turner at (216) 631-3925.
Improve plant health with dormant pruning

Doug Freer

Brrrr... who would venture into the cold and snowy weather this time of year to work in the yard? The brave souls that don their long johns, scarves and parkas to do some dormant pruning will be rewarded with healthier landscape plants and less work in the long run. Many people fear damaging plants and avoid pruning altogether, but with a little knowledge and practice, anyone can achieve positive results.

Pruning is the removal of plant parts to improve plant health. You should remove dead, diseased or damaged plant material at any time. And, there is no time like the present.

Let’s start with the basics

Dormant pruning is comprised of three parts. Corrective pruning redirects growth to achieve a desired shape and a more natural-looking plant. Preventive pruning removes dead, diseased or damaged plant material, as well as problematic branches that may hang over walkways or grow into buildings and homes. Rejuvenating pruning cuts back heavy growth and thins crowded older plants to encourage new growth.

Dormant pruning benefits ornamental plants and trees by removing unhealthy or excessive growth and deadwood, and by improving the natural branching characteristics of the plant. The best time to do it is late January through early March when the plant is inactive. So grab your hat, gloves, and tools and let’s get busy.

Dormant pruning helps to maintain a plant’s size in a limited space, and it revitalizes older, woody plants. A plant pruned during dormancy becomes healthier in spring as the plant’s energy is directed to its fewer remain-

Before you start, have a vision for the project; 2) clear building structures, paths and driveways of obstructing plants; 3) remove any crossing or rubbing branches that might cause future injury; and 4) trim and cut back according to the plant’s natural growing characteristics.

Thinning prevents ornamentals from becoming top heavy and more susceptible to winter snow damage and it encourages the plant to fill in the lower areas with new growth.

Avoid pruning in late fall or early winter. Soil temperatures are still warm and the plant is still actively transferring its energy stored in the canopy to the root system. Pruning in late fall robs the plant of this vital stored energy, potentially weakening it. Heavy fall pruning is not advised because it may encourage new growth that may not have time to harden off before cold weather sets in, potentially causing frost damage to the new growth. One major exception to late winter pruning is spring-flowering ornamentals (e.g. lilac, forsythia, viburnum), which are best pruned after they flower and before they form flower buds for the following year.

When you are ready to prune, follow these steps in order: 1) remove dead, diseased and damaged wood from the plant; 2) clear building structures, paths and driveways of obstructing plants; 3) remove any crossing or rubbing branches that might cause future injury; and 4) thin and cut back according to the plant’s natural growing characteristics. Thinning prevents ornamentals from becoming top heavy and more susceptible to winter snow damage and it encourages the plant to fill in the lower areas with new growth.

A plant pruned during dormancy be-

taining branches supported by the same root mass, resulting in a more prolific and healthy plant. Dormant pruning also reduces headaches during summer pruning work. Keep in mind that pruning actually encourages growth. For those plants that are sheared in summer months like the common privet hedge, new growth rapidly appears at twice the growth output. This is what causes the outer portion of the plant to become so woody – and darn tough to cut back after years of shearing. Selectively removing some of the excessive woodiness will help to redirect plant growth, enabling the plant to fill in its bare areas.

How to prune:

Before you start, have a vision for what you will accomplish so that you are careful to prune in the correct way to achieve your goals. Determine what the plant can handle (you must know the plant you’re working on and its growing habits). Some plants need to be pruned gently, while others benefit from a vigorous pruning. In general, it is best not to prune more than a third or a quarter of any ornamental or tree, and in many cases, removing a fifth of the plant is more appropriate. Rejuvenating pruning usually involves a three to five year pruning plan.

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A new opportunity for home buyers

Gail Jackson

The current economic situation may cause some prospective homebuyers to hesitate, and with good reason. If your income is insecure and you are working to pay off high debts, homeownership may not be for you. If your job is secure, you have savings, and your debts are under control, you may want to consider buying a home now.

Even though it is more difficult to get credit and most people fear their credit report, it's worth the time to investigate whether homeownership is even a possibility. Prospective home buyers should: 1) get an education on the home buying process and prepare for each step; 2) have a housing counselor at Home Repair Resource Center confidentially review your credit; 3) start a designated savings account for your home purchase; and 4) research opportunities for down payment assistance programs. This is just for starters. Buying a home is not something to rush into.

The center is a nonprofit HUD-certified housing counseling agency that provides free home buying education and individual counseling. A counselor will walk you step-by-step through the home buying process and inform you of available resources. The education, guidance and support provided by the center will help you determine whether homeownership is a possibility at this time.

If you are interested in buying a home in Cleveland Heights and you meet federal income guidelines, you may be eligible for up to $15,000 in down payment assistance that is forgiven over time. You must occupy the home as your permanent residence.

Let's say that you want to purchase a modest home for $150,000. If you qualify for the down payment assistance, you will only have to qualify for a $135,000 mortgage. The down payment program requires three percent of the purchase price to be the homebuyer’s own funds, often enough to cover closing costs. If the interest rate on your mortgage of $135,000 is six percent over 30 years, the monthly payment would be $695 (principal and interest). For your full monthly payment, add property taxes and insurance to this amount. As a safeguard for homebuyers using the Cleveland Heights down payment program, the total monthly payment cannot exceed 33 percent of a homebuyer’s monthly gross income.

The center’s trained housing counselors provide education and guidance on the variables to consider when buying a home and the terms used by lenders and real estate professionals. The only cost to you is time.

Once you own a home, the center provides resources and programs to help you maintain it, including monthly classes on how to perform basic home repairs yourself. Call the Home Repair Resource Center at 216-381-6100 and inquire about our Home Buyer Education and Financial Fitness programs. We are here to serve you.

Gail Jackson lives on East Derbyshire and works for the Home Repair Resource Center.
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“They’re very personable, trustworthy, conscientious and clean up after themselves well. They’ve been doing work for me throughout the past three years and do an excellent job. I’d use them again and highly recommend them to others!”

Andrea A., Cleveland Heights

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